Recalcitrant Crusaders? The Relationship between Southern Italy and Sicily, Crusading and the Crusader States, c.1060-1198

P. Z. Hailstone, Advances in Crusades Research (Routledge: Abingdon, 2020), xiv + 235 pp.

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Milan for some considerable time ahead. If one were to read one work on Early Medieval Milan this would be it.

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There has long been a need for a detailed study on Norman Sicily and Southern Italy's engagement with the crusading movement during the Twelfth Century. To date, knowledge of this region's involvement in the crusades has generally hinged on two key points. The first is that Bohemond of Taranto and his contingent are known to have joined the crusade from this area. The second is that King Baldwin I of Jerusalem bigamously married the widow of Roger I of Sicily, Adelaide of Salerno, only to have their union dissolved a year or two before his death (1118). It has long been thought that this insult effectively killed-off relations between Sicily and the Crusader States for the foreseeable future. Hailstone's book addresses both these points, discussing Bohemond and the Hautville clan's involvement in the early crusades in the first few chapters before turning to the long-held scholarly view that, in other respects, the Siclian/South Italian Normans soon proved themselves to be 'recalcitrant crusaders'.

Regarding the First Crusade, Hailstone reaches the entirely reasonable verdict that Pope Urban probably did not work too hard to recruit crusaders among his southern Norman neighbours. The region -especially Sicily- had only recently been conquered and so he seems to have decided that its warriors could not be spared. He took a similar approach to several northern Iberian lords. Bohemond was apparently the exception and Hailstone engages with the much-debated question of his motivation for joining the crusade. She suggests that this was probably not a spontaneous decision -as implied by the *Gesta Francorum*- but the product of long discussion with the papacy and other family members. Her verdict on his motives is fairly conventional in concluding that Bohemond may have had a religious agenda but that his primary concerns appear to have been the improvement of his status and power. Hailstone then offers some insights on a range of themes connected to Bohemond and Tancred - their identity and actions as rulers - including a stimulating discussion on how Norman attitudes towards conquest may have informed their policies whilst governing the principality of Antioch.

Turning to the question of Roger II and his successors' relationship with the Crusader States, Hailstone discusses those few moments when, during the mid-Twelfth century, Sicily showed some interest in the Crusader States. Roger II occasionally became entangled in the principality of Antioch's affairs and in 1151 he married Beatrice of Rethel from the kingdom of Jerusalem. A few other examples could be cited but really Roger's engagement was clearly very limited. Fractionally more interest was shown by his successors and occasional aristocratic groups from the *regno* who either travelled on pilgrimage to Jerusalem or joined a

military campaign in the Crusader States. However, there was no largescale military involvement until the battle of Hattin, which seems to have galvanised Sicily to take a much closer interest in the region's affairs, sending a fleet to northern Syria in 1188. Prior to this, little aid had been sent by Sicily's ruling dynasty to the east although it was involved in a series of attacks against Egypt in the 1150s and 1170s.

The above points give strength to the idea that the *regno* offered little support to the Crusader States. Certainly, given that Sicily was a powerful, maritime state that was among the closest Latin territories to the Crusader States, its very limited record of activity is very striking. Having said this, Hailstone offers the nuancing point that this region was also a vital transit area for pilgrims, traders and crusaders seeking to reach the Crusader States from Western Christendom. She charts the development of pilgrim facilities in towns such as Barletta, Bari and Messina as well as the involvement of the military orders whose presence seems to have become conspicuous enough to be reflected in the written sources during the mid-Twelfth Century. Having said this, the scale of the military orders' establishments in the *regno* still seems relatively modest, certainly in comparison to the major role they would play in supplying the Crusader States in the Thirteenth Century.

In addition to charting the *regno*'s relations with the Latin East, *Recalcitrant Crusaders* also provides a detailed analysis on another key strand in its military policies. During the mid-Twelfth century, Roger II managed to conquer a series of North African ports which remained under Christian control until they were lost a few decades later to the Almohads. The question of whether Roger's North African campaigns should be considered as holding some kind of relevance to the development of the crusading movement has long gone unanswered and so it is very helpful to have this matter explored here in full. Hailstone's view is that these campaigns do not form part of the crusading movement, being instigated for commercial reasons rather than to serve the demands of holy war. Sicily had a strong trading relationship with North Africa and so Roger's actions are better understood as attempt to exert control over an important economic artery.

Overall, this is an impressive piece of work offering a detailed analysis of the *regno*'s engagement with the crusading movement which is in turn situated within the context of its rulers' broader policies towards: the papacy, the Byzantine Empire, North Africa and northern and central Italy. Its underlying argument, whilst not seismic in its implications, is nonetheless surefooted, closely argued, and adds considerable nuance and texture to previous knowledge on this subject. Another dimension deserving of recognition is Hailstone's close attention to the region's architectural traditions and their development during this era. Throughout this work there is an ongoing discussion about what the various influences -whether Islamic, Greek or Latin Christian- on the many secular and ecclesiastical buildings constructed during this era can tells us about the *regno*'s broader identity and political orientation. In this way, *Recalcitrant Crusaders* is a highly commendable study which chimes well with other work exploring different regions in Western Christendom and their varying commitments to the crusading movement.

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